



Tennessee First to the Top Monthly Update

February 2012

- **Standards and Assessments**—Tennessee announced this month that it has selected a Leadership Council to advise the department on the Common Core State Standards transition plan and directly lead and manage all aspects of the work, giving districts a voice in the statewide transition to the Common Core. Thirteen directors, supervisors and an assistant principal from across the state will serve on the Council. They will also be tasked with the selection and training of exemplary educators, who will facilitate summer training on Common Core implementation in July. The Council met for its first planning session on February 17th and will meet monthly leading up to summer training.
- **Data**— Progress is continuing on the development of the P-20 Longitudinal Data System. In the past month functional requirements of the system were defined including the identification of common web application functionality for reporting and data visibility. Key elements for security, data access, and protection of confidential information were also defined. The first draft of the web application mock-up was created to confirm application functionality and the work team identified elements for consideration in the visual design of the system.

The data discovery phase of the project is also continuing to progress. Priorities were established for the inclusion of source data, and preliminary mapping of data tables for clarification and validation was also completed. Finally, the project's governance plan, which outlines data sharing, communications, sustainability, and training elements has been completed.

The department's vendor conducted a functional review of the Early Warning Data System (EWDS) for TDOE staff in February. Additionally, final reviews of the dashboard screens are being completed. Communication on the webinar-based training sessions was disseminated to the pilot districts mid-month.

- **Great Teachers and Leaders**—TNCRED shared preliminary results with the department regarding its strategic compensation survey that was administered in November. The survey was open to all certified personnel in the state's 14 LEAs administering strategic compensation initiatives, including Innovation Acceleration Fund and Competitive Supplemental Fund districts. TDOE staff are planning to use the preliminary results to engage with LEAs that had above

average participant awareness results to identify and share successful communication strategies. TNCREd is continuing to analyze the results and plans to issue district-specific reports in the coming months.

Department leaders and TEAM staff are continuing to provide implementation guidance, maintain communication structures, and ensure data system access and functionality to support the TEAM evaluation system. In mid-February, a new report was added to the data system to allow district and school leaders to clearly see which observations have been entered into the data system for each teacher to support tracking progress to completion.

The January TEAM Support Meetings were used to present critical updates and additional guidance on aspects of the TEAM system. Sessions from these meetings were videotaped and posted on the Electronic Learning Center in February.

TEAM staff began looking forward to year two implementation in February. This includes reviewing feedback received throughout the year and considering tweaks that may be necessary. Work also began to reconvene educator groups in non-tested grades and subjects to review rubric applicability and growth data options. These groups will be meeting in March to provide recommendations to the Department and TEAM staff on revisions and changes for year two.

- **School Turnaround** – On February 9, the U.S. Department of Education approved the state's request for ESEA Flexibility. Through this flexibility request, the state has committed to support the bottom 10% of schools with the largest achievement gaps, as well as the bottom 5% of schools in terms of academic performance.

The Achievement School District (ASD) continues to prepare for operations in the 2012-2013 school year. ASD staff are currently working with Metro Nashville Public Schools and Memphis City Schools to identify the schools that will be part of the ASD for the 2012-2013 school year and plan to make these announcements soon. Two additional ASD staff members, the Chief Operating Officer and School Portfolio Manager, began work in February.

Spring milestone visits began for both cohorts of Renewal Schools. These visits have served as an opportunity for schools to share progress towards meeting their specified performance metrics, while allowing TDOE staff to provide feedback and assistance. Schools are also able to propose amendments to their plans during this period.

- **Local Education Agency Plans** – The Department is continuing to plan for spring partnership meetings with districts to talk about some of the successes and challenges they are experiencing in implementing their Race to the Top plans. The state, through its field service centers, is planning to conduct these meetings with every district between now and May. Meetings are beginning in some regions that last week in February.

Notification of the spring scope of work amendment window was sent to LEAs on February 22nd. This is the last amendment window prior to the summer review of LEA progress towards goals and their year three scopes of work. LEAs will have until March 30th to submit any amendment requests to the department for review.

- **STEM**—The Tennessee Higher Education Commission released the second-round RFP for STEM Professional Development on February 1st.

The Tennessee STEM Innovation Network (TSIN) received 8 proposals for the next round of schools and hubs from institutions across the state. Reviews were conducted by a committee and their evaluations were compiled by a statistician. Final decisions are being made and awards are expected to be announced soon. The TSIN Advisory Council also held a meeting in February where it heard updates from the Nashville and Knoxville schools and hubs.